

*A brief Answer to a late Discourse concerning The Unreasonableness
of a New Separation.*

WHether the Letter was written to, or feigned by our Author I know not, nor is it of any concern; either way it might give a fit Occasion to start the Question: And he pretends a surprize to read that the Non-Swearers should think themselves bound to seperate Communion, though he struggles with himself to think it possible, that those who have expressed so great a Sense of the Mischief of it in others, should be so ready to fall *into it themselves*. But alas, he need not have been at that Pains if he *had* considered, That they do not *fall*, but are forced into it, as I shall presently make appear. Indeed he seems to be troubled, for he tells us, That he soon apprehended the mischievous Consequence of a new Schism: And I wish he, and some others had been as Quick-sighted in foreseeing and preventing such Causes, which unavoidably produce such Mischiefs: But I find that some Men look one way, and some another; and some after they have done all the Mischief they can, yet will not leave off that old stale Trick of wiping their Mouths, And saying they have done no Hurt.

But the Wonder is, that Men should be so Obstinate, *When the difference is only about the Resolution of a Case of Conscience, wherein wife and good Men may easily differ*. And is then a Case of Conscience really so trivial a Thing? I had thought there was not any moral Action, and consequently

not any Duty of a Christian, about which a Case of Conscience might not one time or other arise; and may these then be determin'd either ways, because wise and good Men may so easily differ: What is this but to destroy the very Nature of Good and Evil, or to make the bounds so moveable, that we shall never know certainly where to find them. I shall readily grant, that when the matter is Dark and Intricate, we may well hope, that God will be merciful to a mistaken Person; but if a Case of Conscience arise, let Men differ as they please, he only determines right, who determines with the nature of the Thing; and he is only Safe, who follows that Determination. He that determins beside, or against the nature of the Thing, determins wrong, and in moral Actions he certainly doth ill, who follows such determination, however merciful soever God upon other accounts may be to him. And this Nature seems to have taught every Man; for why else should all the Comforts of a Man's Soul so much depend upon the Satisfaction of his Conscience, that he hath taken a right course: Whereas it were the easiest matter in the World to satisfy Conscience, if without much ado they might safely submit to any Determination, which comes from a Man, who, for any Thing we know, may be Wise and Good. And therefore whatsoever our Authour may think, I shall desire him henceforward,

A

ward,



ward, to speak more reverently of a Case of Conscience, lest he tempt a loose World both to think and speak meanly of our Employment.

Well, a Case of Conscience it is, though a Shriveled one; but the Oaths (saith he) are not made a Condition of Communion, and therefore cannot be a sufficient cause of Separation. Now I could have told him forty Things which they are not; and if he should be out in that one, which he mentions, it would be very unlucky; and that he is so, I shall endeavour presently in its proper place to prove. In the mean time I could tell him of a Man, who hath Discourfed much of Terms of Communion, who hath Quarrell'd almost all, and yet never failed to comply with any that were set up; and it is hard to tye us up to that Man's Terms of Communion, which no Man living could ever yet learn what they were.

But he tells us, That there is a difference between a *Tender and a four Conscience*, and I doubt not, but in his Liberality he intended the *four Conscience* for us; and he might have made it what he pleased when he was about it. But as I am well satisfied in my Conscience (at least as to my self) that I have taken a safer course in this Matter to appear before the Tribunal of Heaven than our Jolly Swearers: So I will assure this Author, That if he have no better Physick than he Administers in this Discourse, he will never make a true Cure of any of those Consciences, which he is pleased to represent as Diseased and Sowre; but perhaps the

Sowreness may lie elsewhere, and some complain of the Light, when the fault is in the weakness of their Eyes.

It is a wonderful Condescension in our Author, but to suppose, *That those who take the Oaths may be to blame*, but he saith, That nevertheless, if they act according to their Consciences, there can be no ground for Separation, unless it be Lawful to separate from all such, who follow the Dictates of an erroneous Conscience, and so there will be no end of Separation. And indeed at this rate, there will be no end of Trifling and Sophistry: For if I am bound to separate from some erroneous Consciences, Why must it needs be Lawful to separate from all? Have all erroneous Consciences an equal influence on Communion and good Manners? If a Man was perswaded, that the Elements of Bread and Wine, after Consecration were really Transubstantiated into that very Body and Blood of Christ, which suffered on the Cro's; and accordingly should in Conscience adore it, and think all others bound to do so too. I have so much Charity for our Author, as to think he would not joyn in Communion with him: And if I had to do with one, who scrupled eating Flesh on *Fridays*, I desire our Author to give me a good Reason, Why I should forbear Communion with him on that account? So that after all, it is, not the erroneous Conscience, but the nature of the Thing wherein Conscience errs; which, according as it affects Communion, either requir's a Separation, or allows a continuance

nuance of Communion. And of which nature the Matter in Controversy is, shall be presently considered; and then perhaps I may help him to imagine (though he saith he cannot at present) why, *Because some Mens Consciences are so tender in the point of Loyalty, that they cannot take the Oaths, that they must needs be so tender too as not to joyn Communion with those who do it.*

But he saith he will leave general Reflections, and apply himself to the main point; and I am very glad we shall come to it, for here I intend to close with him. The grand Question he makes to be this; *Whether there be any Reason for these Scruples about the Oaths?* and then infers, *That if there be not, it will be granted that there can be no Reason for a Separation on the account of them:* And then proceeds, *That if there be any Reason, it must arise, either from the continuing Obligation of the former Oaths, or from the nature of the present Oaths.* I wish he had told us what he means by Scruples, and what the Scruples are; for we commonly account Scruples to be odd troublesome things, which proceed from a Mind well inclined, but a weak Understanding, not able to support it self, whereby men are desirous to do well, but strangely timorous and over fearful of the lawfulness of every thing they go about. So that at first dash he represents all the Non-Swearers to be, at best, only a Parcel of well meaning Fools. For my own part, I have no Scruples, but am well satisfied, without any Scruple, that I cannot lawfully take the Oaths. And though this Author writes as trium-

phantly as if he had the Reason, Sense and Conscience of all Mankind in his keeping, yet am I so unfortunate as to think my Foundation unshaken. But, before I can proceed, I must inform you, that he hath not fairly and truly stated the Case. For the Question is not nakedly and simply, whether the Oaths may or may not be lawfully taken; (though I will discourse that with him in fit place) but whether Oaths imposed under such unjust and merciless Penalties, and attended with such fatal Consequences, will not warrant the Non-takers in a Separation from such as do. And to clear up this, I must crave leave to open the Case more fully.

After six Months Warning, & frequent Rabbling, if we take not the Oaths, we are silenced for six Months more; so that if the Oaths be not taken, all the Churches in England must be shut up. I know not any considerable difference betwixt this and a *Popish Interdict*; neither matters it much, whether we lie at the mercy of the Pope or a Parliament, whether God shall be worshipped in the Land, or not. This time being elapsed, and the Oaths not taken, then are we absolutely deprived, and not only our legal Estates taken away, and our Wives and Children sent to wander like Vagabonds, and beg their Bread; but our Flocks taken from us, and we not suffered to discharge our Duties towards God and his Church, and the Souls committed to our Care, which our Orders and Institution enable us to, and require from us: And when, without taking the Oaths, we are not suffered to discharge our Duties, nor act in

any Communion as Ministers, I desire to know, what this wants of being made a Condition of Communion to us, *quatenus* Ministers.

But perhaps he will say, That we are not hereby forced to break Communion, but may still joyn in the same Communion as Lay-men: I thank him kindly; when some men have betrayed their Consciences for large Preferments, that they may enjoy them quietly, we must part with all, and our Ministry to boot. But though this may serve their turn, it will not ours; for if no Lay-power can make or unmake a Bishop, Priest or Deacon, then the Charge of our Ministry will still lie upon us, notwithstanding this depriving Act, and necessity will lie upon us to discharge it at our Peril. To this end I would desire this learned Author to tell me, whether he takes us for *Baal's* Priests, or *Jeroboam's* Priests, or *Parliament* Priests, or *Convention* Priests, or *God's* Priests: If he will, with *Erasmus*, throw all into the Civil Power, I have nothing to do with him, nor any more to account of him than as one of the common Herd: But if he thinks the Power of the Clergy, as Clergy, is derived from Christ, to whom the Father gave all Power; and to be received by a Succession of Authority, who received it from them, whom Christ sent as the Father sent him; and if he think that the Bishops of the Christian Church were the Successors of the Apostles in their ordinary and standing Authority for all Ages; and that they were empowered to derive Authority to several Orders of men, to exercise Spiritual Offices for the Benefit of the

Church, still retaining the supreme Ecclesiastical Authority in their own Order in their own Churches, as all Antiquity thought, and most sober men since: Then he must acknowledge that a Clergy-man's Authority is from God; and that, notwithstanding any Civil Act to the contrary, he is bound to take care of his Office, and give account of his Stewardship, though the most bitter Persecutions attend him for so doing. And therefore if they will warrant a Civil Act to disable us from doing our Duties, they must excuse us if we have these dreadful apprehensions of the Account we have to give; That we endeavour to do it as we can, at our hazard, when we are not suffered to do it in Communion with them.

And yet this is not all, for there is one thing more which seems unavoidably to necessitate a Schism, if we are discharged from our Office upon account of these Oaths, though the Crime will lie at their Door, not ours. Our Author has been as great a Trimmer of Ecclesiastical Orders as any man I know; but now being commonly styled a Bishop, I hope he will prove *Sirenus sui Ordinis Assertor*; and being he is as well seen in Antiquity as any man in *Europe*, I hope he will not quarrel me, who am only a Presbyter, for asserting that Prerogative of his Order, which genuine Antiquity always appropriated to it. Now in the Primitive Times, (whose Example and Rule our Church follows) in every Church or Diocese, (as now called) all the inferior Clergy were subject to their Bishops; and the Bishops of their several Churches or Diocesses

Diocesses were not to transact any Ecclesiastical Matter of moment and common concern, without the Consent of him who was *Episcopus primæ Sedis*, or Metropolitan. And though sometimes Persecutions made fearful Squanders amongst them, yet it was never thought to take away the Subjection of the inferiour Clergy to their Bishop, nor the Dependence of the Bishops upon their Metropolitan: And if any Clerk withdrew his Obedience to his Bishop, or any Bishop denied his Dependence upon his Metropolitan, he was lyable to, and certainly struck with the Censures of the Church, though he suffered never so deeply. And if either by the Levity or Apostacy of the Clergy or People, or the Impetuosity of the Secular Power, a Bishop was set over a Church or Diocess, in opposition to one there Canonically placed already, or a Metropolitan placed over a Province, in opposition to one already Canonically placed there, it always in course produced a Schism, and the Church was ever accounted to be with those, who adhered to them, who were first rightly fixed; and they always were esteemed Schismatics, who sided with that Bishop or Metropolitan, who was set up in opposition. Now this is very like to be our Case, and is the very thing which our Author ought to have stated. For our Metropolitan, and several other Bishops, are now actually by a Secular Act Deprived: But are they Deprived by any Canons or Canonical Censures of the Church? Or are they Discharged from their Office and Trust which God hath

committed to them? Did ever any Secular Act, much less such an Act as this, pretend to Unbishop and Unpriest Men? I shall easily grant, That the Secular Power hath often Seized Bishops Estates, and Imprisoned and Banished their Persons: But still they were accounted Bishops of those Churches, and ceased not to discharge their Duties, as their Circumstances would permit, and neither their Clergy nor People renounced them, unless they were guilty of such Crimes, for which the Censures of the Church did Depose them, or the Canons *ipso Facto* Deprive them. But where's the Heresie? Where are any of all those Crimes, for which these our Bishops merit Deposition? Or what just Censure of the Church hath passed upon them? For any thing I can see, if they be not Lords, they are Bishops still, and bound by their Sacred Function, and their Duty to God, to take care of their Churches; and consequently the Clergy of their Diocesses, whether Swearers or Non-swearers, ought to live in Subordination and Subjection to them, and the People to pay them Obedience in all Things appertaining to God. So that if any other Bishop be thrust into a Church belonging to any of these Bishops, he can be no other than an Intruder; and if he claim a Right to the Church, and Act in Opposition to the first Canonical Bishops, he must be a Schismatick; for both People and Clergy are bound to adhere to their first and true Bishop, and oppose the other, and refuse Communion with him. But upon our Constitution, we of the Clergy have

have a further Obligation to this, for we are Sworn to pay him Canonical Obedience, and therefore we must either oppose any Man, who Un canonically sets up against him, or be Perjured: And this will reach to you Swearers as well as the Non-swearers; and there is no way to free us from this, but either his Death, or Desecration, or Renunciation, though this last was never accounted commendable in a Bishop.

But then if one be put into the place of the Metropolitan, the Schism will be wider and more pernicious; for both People and Clergy, and all the Bishops of the Province (so that our Author himself is here caught in a Noose, and shall be in a streight betwixt two) are bound to adhere to the first and true Metropolitan, and to refuse Communion with him who sets up against him; so that if the extravagant Penalties of this Act take place, and others be put into the Churches of the pretended Deprived, of necessity a Schism must follow: And according to the Sense, Judgment and Practise, of the ancient Church, the Church will be with us, and the Schism with them; and their Schism will be much of the contrary Nature with that of the *Donatists*; the Terms of Communion with the one, being as much too loose, as with the other, too streight. Our Author, who is old excellent at Mustering up the ill Presidents, I know will think to slur this by telling us Tales, how Emperors have put out Bishops, translated Metropolitans, or erected new ones and the like. But it is one thing to act in pursuance to the Ca-

nons of the Church, and another to act against them; it is one thing to shew particular favour to a Place or Person, and that with the consent of the Church; and another thing to impose upon the Church against her Laws and the Laws of God: If he have other Instances, I shall either prove that they were Unjust, or come not up to our Case, or else I will yield him the Cause.

I know not whether I can be so apprehensive of the Mischiefs of Schism, as our Author pretends to be, but I think I dread them as much; and the more, because by woful Experience it is evident to the World, that the sad Divisions amongst Christians, have rendred Christianity little more than a bare Name: And therefore I am unwilling to lay on Load, though to help the right Side. But I will remind our Author (and I am apt to think he will quickly guess what I mean) that there are some Scandalous Persons mentioned in Antiquity, to whom I could so parallel a sort of Persons amongst us, that scarce one Egg should seem more like another; and if things are thus push'd on to the height, I hope whatever we suffer, we shall not basely desert God and his Church, and our Duty; and though they may go clothed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fare sumptuously every Day, whilst care is taken that we may be Starved, yet they must expect to be Pelted, and then Men will speak and write their Minds freely: For in vain do you imagine, that when Men have nothing to lose, they have anything to fear.

Whether I have stated the Case right,

right, I must leave to indifferent Persons to judge; but if it be right then I think it is clear, That a Schism will be unavoidable, and that they may wash their Hands with *Pilate*, but cannot wipe off the Crime. And if I have stated the Case rightly, I need not trouble my self to give any Answer to his Arguments, because upon this State they are all beside the Business, and nothing to the purpose. But because under a pretence of Arguing against Schism, he really undertakes the defence of the Oaths, and to cover their own Perjury would make it a Crime in us not to do the same thing. I shall take some notice of them on that account, but very briefly, and without any particular relation to the Case of the supposed Schism, as to which they are Impertinent. And here I need not follow him through all his copious Eloquence, pretty Disguises, variety of Reading, and subordinate Reasonings. For it is apparent to any Man who hath but half an Eye, that the whole stress of his Discourse is founded on this single Point. That the consideration of the publick Good doth dissolve the Obligation of an Oath to a Sovereign Prince rightfully claiming: For this he must mean, if he speak home to the purpose; and if this Foundation prove Sandy, then he hath only raised a ruinous Building.

But to prevent slanderous Tongues, I must first premise some Things. First, That I do think that all Sovereign Princes are bound to have Respect to the publick Good, that as their Station is above all other Men,

so their Actions are of a more publick Influence and Concern, and of all they shall give a more severe Account to God than other Men, by how much their Trust from him is greater. Secondly, That Kings deviating from the publick Good, may be Informed, Advised and Admonished, by proper Persons in a fit manner; yea that in some Cases they may be sharply Reproved, perhaps it is particularly the Duty of some Men to do this, though at their Peril. Thirdly, That if a Lawful King command me to any thing that is Wicked, or palpably against the publick Good, I ought not therein actually to obey him, and that I may use all Lawful means to prevent such Mischief; but not by Resisting, or by being Injurious to the Person or Honour of the Prince. But then I must add, That no pretence of publick Good whatsoever can warrant us to destroy a Lawful King, or take off the Obligations of an Oath, whereby we have bound our selves, in all things Lawful and Honest to obey him: For this were really to overturn all things, and to destroy the publick Good, under pretence of preserving it. The contrary our Reverend Author undertakes to prove, which I cannot reflect upon without Grief; because it seems to me a Task which would much better have become an Old Committee-man or Sequestator, than a Divine of the Church of *England*.

And yet after all if we should grant, that he had proved it in *Thesi*, yet he has no where so much as offered to prove it in *Hypothesi*, and apply

apply it to our particular Case. So that in our present Concern no considering Person can be one jot the better for all his rambling Arguments. But to evince the Error of his main *Thesis*, I shall now offer some few things to consideration, and then give a brief answer to some things, which perhaps might not otherwise seem so directly and fully answered.

How Specious or Glorious soever any Proposition may seem in the Theory; yet it ought not to be esteemed as right or sound, if it be impracticable; without filling the World with perpetual Troubles and Confusions. That his Doctrine is very liable to be abused, I suppose he will not deny; (though, not long since, a Reverend Person did deny it to my Face;) for the greatest part of Mankind being wicked, and credulous against their Governors; under this pretence a set of Knaves, with active Fools, may at any time cry up a dissolution or forfeiture of the Government, make the best of Kings, and overturn any Establishment; and we in *England* ought the more to be afraid of it, because this pretence hath been here most taking and most mischievous. The Publick Good hath been made the Publick Chear, and Common Sham; and I can scarce remember, that I ever heard Men commonly talk loud of Publick Good, but there was mischief brewing: And I am confident, that this Scholastick *Chimera*, (for as they use it, it is no other,) within the space of 50 years last past, hath cost this Nation as much Blood and

Treasure, as tolerably well improv'd to this Day might have well nigh peopled, and stocked half *America*.

But, in the next place, let us consider, Who shall be Judge of this Publick Good? If the Supreme Governor, then our Author hath all this while been in a wrong Box, and might better have held his Peace; if he will not allow it to be placed there, because a single Man may be corrupted or deceived: The Answer is easie, that so may he, or any other Man; for I know no security that we now have, that any Man shall be infallible as to Truth and Right, and immoveable as to goodness. Our greatest safety lies in honesty and industry, with humble Prayers for God's Grace and Assistance; and perhaps the best State either of private Persons or Communities in this Life, is to be tolerably well: and if Persons cannot be content to enjoy that, but make it their whole business perpetually to mend it, they had best have a care that they do not, worse than that restless Projector, who to make a perfect Engine would needs erect a Windmill upon a Watermill, and so turn'd and overturn'd, contriv'd and hewed, till he reduc'd both to a pair of Nut-cracks. But then if any other man, or body of men, and not the Sovereign Prince, be made Judge of this Publick Good, we are nothing the better, but something the worse. for this is to set a Supream above a Supream. For whosoever is Judge of the Publick Good, according to which all Men's actions are to be directed, he has really the Command of

of all Men, whatsoever another may have in Name. But after all, the matter comes to the Mobile, and every Man must judge for himself; and so, for ought I see, may translate his Allegiance or Obedience, or turn King of himself, as he pleases. For it matters not, what really is the Publick Good; for in Practice Men must and will guide their Actions by what they think is so, whether right or wrong: For if my Oath bind me to the Publick Good, I must be judge what it is, or else I cannot answer the ends of my Oath in our Author's sence, who discharges a Subject from his Allegiance, in case the Publick Good intervene between him and the Prince. Now what brave Work will this make? We have *Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Socinians*, and there were *Church of England-Men*; perhaps there are some few still: Now let the Prince direct as he please, or let the Publick Good bewhat it will, it is certain that every one of these Parties will judge that to be for the Publick Good, which is most agreeable to their Scheme of Principles, and makes for their Interest: And what a fine task hath a Prince, 'to be bound at every turn, and in every thing, to please every one of these Parties? If he do not, then cry they, the Publick Good is concern'd, and they are absolv'd from their Allegiance. Miserable Kings! Or rather Miserable People! For at this rate, when can we be quiet or safe, unless one of these Parties should be

so fortunate, as, for the Publick Good, to knock all the rest o'ch'-head? Such is the Fruit of this celebrated Doctrine. We very well know, and 'tis not long since, that it was the Grand Topick exclaimed against, that the Pope challengeth a Power of Deposing Princes; and indeed it is a Doctrine, turbulent, pernicious, and to be abhorred: And yet did ever any Pope pretend to Deprive a Prince, but the necessary benefit of Christianity, and the Publick Good, was made the Pretence and ground of it? And have not we extremely mended the matter, by putting it into the Power of every Subject to Depose his King; or at least, to endeavour it to his utmost, in case he apprehends it will be for the Publick Good? For my part, I never can be a Papist; and yet I think, at this rate, Protestant Princes have made an ill exchange of one Pope, for so many thousands. And it is a wonder to me, how these Men come to be the Darlings of Kings, who upon their Principles can never be made sure to any, but are dangerous to all.

Next I desire to know of our Author, what this Publick Good is, and where this Divine beauty dwells, whom all our *Knights Errant* run Mad for, and fill the World with Blood and Slaughter? For in their way of discourse, the Publick Good is generally made a delicate fine thing in the Abstract; a seperate invisible Being, distinguished from all personal interest and benefit.

ness. Now if this Publick good be good for no Body, he may keep it to himself for me, if the rest of his mad crew will permit it: But if Publick good be more than an airy Notion, and really prove to be a personal good, and that which makes for the Welfare of every one in the Community, then I am willing to put in for my share; and I think every Man hath, or ought to have, a share; and Kings the greatest of all. And if we leave off these nice thin Distinctions, and suffer Publick Good to be (as it ought) for the sake and benefit of Persons; then we shall find, that she is a most sweet natur'd Creature, that doth good to all; and if at any time by chance, she seem to have done any particular Person an unkindness; yet one way, or other, she abundantly makes him amends for it. But Alas! such a Publick Good would do our Author's Argument no service; for this Publick Good would never have taught us to Depose a Rightful King, to lose our Trade, our Men, our Money, and bring our selves under the just apprehension of those dreadful Judgments, which a People ought to expect, who have rebell'd against God and Man. The destroying the Community for the Publick Good, is a thing that passeth my Understanding.

Further, I desire our Author to instruct me, whether the Publick Good be not only consistent

with manifest Injustice and Wrong, but also an encouragement, and sufficient Warrant, for Men to do that which is palpably unjust and wrongful? If he do not affirm this, then his Publick Good doth him no Service, because it comes not up to our case; and if he do affirm it, then I desire him to acquit St. Paul from Preaching false Doctrine, when he tells us, *That their Damnation is just, who say they may do evil, that good may come of it.* And a shame take those silly Heathen Athenians, who rejected the Counsel of Themistocles, because Aristides made this report of it to them, that it was indeed profitable to the Commonwealth, but not honest: had they been Christians, they might easily have got over such a pitiful Scruple; and a learned Doctor, nay (God be merciful to us) a Bishop (commonly so stiled) of our Church, would have taught them, that the Publick Good sanctified all, and that we ought to boggle at nothing to procure it. *When, O Lord, shall we be delivered from these mortified Hypocrites, who fast for strife and debate, and make long Prayers for Pretences, whilst like Locusts they devour all the good of the Land?*

The Publick Good is a very honest, harmless thing in its self, but, as used of late, hath done a World of mischief; and now, I think, our Author is improving it to the height, to make it dissolve the

the obligation of Oaths, which are the most Sacred Tye can be laid on Man; and yet at the same time he destroys the obligation of those very Oaths he perswades Men to take: For if Men should think it for the Publick Good to recal their *Lawful Prince* upon honest terms; What would become of the obligation of his new Oaths? And indeed in his sense, all Oaths to the *Supreme Governor* are not only Elusory, a mocking both of God and Man, but mischievous and destructive of the *Publick Peace*: For he grants, that the End and Design of administering such Oaths, is to ensure the *Subject* to the *Prince*; and certainly the *Publick Good* and *Peace* requires, that in all honest ways they be fast to him: But if the *true and just measure* (as he calls it) of the obligation of these Oaths be the *Publick Good*, so that they bind a Man to pursue that, though to the destruction of the Person to whom they Swear, they are so far from being a security to him, that upon the *Plea of Publick Good* they may be set up as a pretence, yea as an obligation to Rebel against him. At this rate every Oath will be dangerous and seditious; and it would be the wisdom and safety of the *Prince* never to suffer any to be administered.

Even those he calls *Political Oaths*, were ever intended as a *Personal Security*, and ever thought so, and the *Publick Good* requires they should be so; but, in our Author's sense, they never can be so. And it is somewhat strange to me, that he who has despised, all sorts of *Persons*, as ignorant and silly, in respect of himself, should now endeavour to perswade us, that all Mankind has ever been so cunning as to Swear in his abstracted Metaphysical Notion.

I as heartily desire the *Publick Good* as any Man, and think it every Man's duty in his Station, and to his Power to promote it; but I think it never can be done by expelling *Kings*; and that rather it is against the *Publick Good* by violence to oppose the *Supreme Governor*, much more to Dethrone him; for it is always accompanied with such heart-burnings, with such discontents and factions, with such disorders and open violence, with such overturings and unsettledness, with the ruin of many Families, and often with so much Blood and Slaughter and long Wars; that the worst of Tyranny (which can never last long) were better to be born, than to seek a remedy against it by such unhappy means. And besides

besides all this, the ill example of such proceedings influen-
ceth Posterity, and becomes
the occasion and promoter of
Eternal Troubles, wherein
the Peaceable and Good are al-
ways the greatest Sufferers.
And since he thinks the Pub-
lick Good is so much advanced
by the late Revolution, I desire
him to cast up the account,
and tell us how much better
we now are, than we were
in K. J's Reign? For my
part, I do not think so many
losses, so great charges, such
threatning dangers, to be
compensated by his gaining
a Bishoprick.

I grow weary of discour-
sing of a Publick Good, which
is set up to destroy it self. I
shall now give a brief Answer
to such other things in the
Discourse, as may any way
seem to require it, and con-
clude. To secure the Law on
his side he cites *Glanvil* and
Bracton, but forgets what *St.*
Paul and *St. Peter* said; let
him take his share with the
Lawyers; I will venture my
Soul with the Apostles: Nor
need I Answer the Citation;
for as I ever thought, that it
was the Duty of a Sovereign
Prince to his Power, not only
to protect his Subjects, but to
be tender of them; so I could
never be perswaded, that it
was Lawful upon any pre-
tence whatsoever to Rebel,

or countenance Rebellion a-
gainst him; and, not long
since, I am sure this was both
the Doctrine of the Church of
England, and the Law of the
Land.

The History of Passive Obe-
dience he hath answered with
the greatest ease imaginable;
for he tells us, that it is imper-
tinent to this purpose, because
here is no renouncing the Doctrine
of Passive Obedience, or asserting
the lawfulness of Resistance; but
the single point is, Whether the
Law of our Nation doth not bind
us, &c. Now, though I think
a Divine might have made a
double point of it, yet for
once let it pass. Gentlemen,
you have only changed the
Object of your Obedience, it
may be as Passive as you will;
but if some blunt Fellow were
to put this into plain English,
I fancy I should hear him
speak after this manner: *My*
Masters, you have been all this
while mistaken as to Passive
Obedience; for it is only a
Doctrine which teacheth, or, at
least, leaves all Men at liberty,
to be Weathercocks, to turn with
every Wind, and comply with
every turn; and is as good a
Doctrine as any Turncoat could
wish for. I confess, I did not
understand the Mystery be-
fore, and I think our Author
has made a very seasonable
discovery if it, and I wish he
alone may have the Honour
of it. He

He thinks three Objections may be raised against him out of the *History of Passive Obedience*, which he branches into several particulars, but stops all their Mouths with Publick Good; but to prevent their choaking, I have pulled it out, and left their mouths open again, and therefore need not trouble myself farther in that matter, unless he should get another stopple.

His comparison of a *Vow* and an *Oath*, is nothing to the purpose; for who ever thought, that either a *Vow* or an *Oath* bound a *Man* contrary to his real *Duty*? The Sin in such a case is in making them, not in breaking them: But let our Author speak out, and tell me, that taking an *Oath* of Allegiance to a Lawful Prince, is contrary to my *Duty*, and then I will thank him for proving, that it is Lawful to take an *Oath* to him who expells him: He adds, *That if Parents, instead of regarding the good of their Children, do openly design their ruine, and contrive ways to bring it about; none will say but that they are bound to take care of their own welfare.* Now I know not what a *Madman* may do; but none will suppose, that a *Parent* in his right Wits will do thus; as it is both *unnatural* and *unreasonable* to

think, that a *King* should contrive the destruction of his Subjects, without whom he hath none to Reign over, or assist him: But he should have told us, that the Children, in such a case, might have taken away all the Father's subsistence, and done their utmost endeavour to starve him, or cut his throat; and no doubt but this had been an excellent Comment on the Fifth Commandment.

I know not to what purpose he so labours to prove, *That a Natural Equity or Common Right* is due to Subjects, yea even to Slaves: For who ever thought, that being under Government, *Metamorphos'd* us into Beasts, or worse? Whereas it has been ever judg'd the great advantage of the *reasonable Creature*, that he is both *Sociable* and *Governable*: But he should have proved, that because the Subject has a *Common Right*, therefore he can receive no wrong; or if he do, or apprehend he shall, then he may cry out the Publick Good, and raise Rebellion, and overturn any Government: Nor was it kindly done to condemn Mr. *Hobbs* for laying down a Proposition, which tended to the securing of Government when once established in his way, when any *Man* may

see

see that he hath borrow'd the worst of Mr. *Hrbbs's* Principles to patch up his Discourse; nor is there any thing material in his whole Discourse, but it might have been brought (*mutatis mutandis*) to vindicate the *Long Parliament*, and *Oliver*, and condemn *K. Charles the Martyr*, and his *Loyal Sufferers*: But if you examine their Principles narrowly, you may observe that they are fitted to overturn any Government, but secure none; so that I wonder any Government can endure them, or the *Men* that teach them.

The *Casuits*, have displeased him for allowing men under a State of Usurpation, to do those things which tend to the Publick Safety; and in another Paragraph he discovers the reason of his displeasure to be this; that they have not allowed them to do every thing in a State of Usurpation, which they might do under their Lawful Sovereign: But he is even with them, and roundly condemns them all for founding it on the presumptive consent of the absent Prince; but it is his own mistake; for quite contrary they found the presumptive Consent of the absent Prince upon the Publick Good, and his desire of the preservation of his Subjects; and Bishop

Sanderfon, *Obl. Conf. Præl. 5.* over whom he seems peculiarly in this place to insult, gives this reason of the Prince's presumptive will: *Ejusmodi obsequio, non tam injuste dominantis, quam toti communitatis, hoc est, Reipublice servivisse existimandus est; quam salvam esse, justis hæredis nihil minus interest, quam illius qui de facto in eâ dominatur. Fortasse an & multo etiam magis, quo sincerius patriam diligere censendus est, & ei omnia bona velle, qui genuinus Pater Patriæ est, quam quo eo excluso in ipsius aedes se ingressus, & in familiam ipsius jus & Imperium exercet, &c.*

I do not remember any thing more in his discourse material, except a numerous heap of Instances, and in the Van comes the Unfortunate *Vortigern*, whom his Nobles forsook for endeavouring to bring in a Foreign Power: But if that be a sufficient discharge of Subjects Obligation to their Prince, as he tells us, and they thought, and endeavours to persuade us to be of the same mind; I believe *Some-Body* will give him no thanks for it. To run through all his Instances would be extremely troublesome, and therefore I will make short work of them; for what a miserable streight had this *Great Man* been reduced to, if

if a wicked World and the madness of the People had not furnished him with Instances of strange Disorders, Irregularities, and mischievous overturnings of government? But when those very Instances shew us the Confusions, Calamities, and Miseries, which attend such doings; to make them the Rule and Measure of our Actions, is to be madder than Madmen, and to take away all hopes of ever arriving at any settled and firm establishment. But what can we expect better from a Man, who lays aside all his Divinity for a little bad Law, and worse History?

He is so elevated with his last Instance, about the determination of our Saviour, of paying Tribute to *Tiberius*; that in zeal he cannot forbear to call the Non-swearers perjur'd and Apostates.

Some men surely, are not only privileged, but admired, for speaking Contradictions. But to be short, I think the testimony of *Velleius Paterculus* concerning the Authority of *Tiberius*, to be better than our Author's, though he so scornfully reject him; and I could wish, that if it had been but for the sake of *Dio's* reason, that some others had imitated the Wisdom he commends in

Augustus, in declining the imposition of Oaths. He boasts what he had gained upon the account of the *Jews* paying Tribute, but it will impose upon none but Fools and Partizans; and I will give it no particular answer, because he misrepresents the case both of the *Jews* and *Tiberius*; as to which I will only mention some few particulars, and then let him reckon his gains. First, *That none should rule over the Jews, but one of their Brethren, was designed as a Blessing, if they continued in Obedience, and an encouragement to do so; so their being given up to a Foreign Power was a Judgment, and Curse upon them for their Sins; and which had not befallen them but for their wickedness.* Secondly, *That they were under a State of Conquest, and that to such a Power, as they were no way able to oppose.* Thirdly, *That the Question to our Saviour was not concerning Oaths but Tribute, which, he himself grants, all Casuists do allow may be paid even to an Usurper.* Fourthly, *That at that time no Man had Jns potius, nor had there been any prior Oaths taken in Bar against Tiberius; so that though he calls him an Usurper, I know not where he will find one with a better Title.* And by this it appears, that

that our Saviour gave not the least encouragement to take contradictory Oaths; and I think our Author might have been better employed, than thus to attempt to fasten such a scandal upon the Great Preacher of Righteousness, and Saviour of the World: But I forbear too, though I scarce know how a Man can, in such a case; for many reasons I am unwilling to judge severely of my Brethren, who have sworn; nor hath any Man been more forbearing; yet since he so boldly accuseth those, as Men of much greater Heat than Judgment, who call it Per-

jury; I will let pass their heat, and interpose for their Judgment, and if I may have liberty to Write, I will undertake to prove it so; and if I fail in the Judgment of my Bishop and Metropolitan, then to submit to any Censure he shall inflict upon me. To conclude, the Sectaries are all run mad, and become more ungovernable than the *Possessed* in the Evangelist, and daily increase; and I see not how a Schism in the Church of *England* can be avoided, if these Oaths be imposed. We have made wise work of it, and the Lord have Mercy upon us.

F I N I S.
